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WILDLIFE



BULLETIN

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Montana Fishing Season Opens



It is at this season of the year along with the fast unleashing of the winter snows rushing down into turbulent streams that the age-old love of angling makes itself felt. For many this urge has been somewhat dormant during the long winter months. However, with the first touch of spring it usually becomes so irresistible

that any excuse is considered legitimate as long as it affords the opportunity of getting out on a favorite stream or lake.

The streams are generally clearer this spring as compared with the average opening season and good fishing is anticipated. Montana offers many kinds of fishing for all those who seek such recreation.

Along Montana's Waters With Rod and Reel



Montana is traversed by four major water sheds, the Yellowstone, Missouri, Kootenai and the Clark's Fork of the Columbia. These major streams with their many tributaries and hundreds of connected lakes offer to the angling

enthusiast a diversity of fishing that can be found in few other places in the United States.

The Yellowstone Drainage

The headwaters of the Yellowstone affords splendid fishing for Natives, Rainbow, Loch Leven, Eastern Brook and Whitefish, while the lower stretches of the River give the warm water fishing enthusiast ample opportunity for the catching of Pike, Catfish, Pickerel, Fresh Water Drum and Ling.

The Missouri Drainage

The Missouri River drainage system is probably one of the most outstanding fishing waters to be found in the West. It must be remembered that the Madison, Gallatin and Jefferson Rivers flow together near Three Forks, Montana, to form the main Missouri and these three tributaries, especially the Madison and the Gallatin, offer a degree of fishing impossible to describe in the few short paragraphs allotted the writer at this time. In these tributary streams and lakes are to be found Natives, Rainbow, Loch Leven, Eastern Brook, Whitefish and the Montana Grayling.

Good fishing for many of the trout species continues on down the River as far as Great Falls. From this point on down stream there is a transition to the warm water species and Pike, Catfish and Ling are relatively abundant.

It might be well to mention at this time that with the creation of Fort Peck Lake we have a fishing area larger than all of the lakes in Montana combined. Countless numbers of Perch have made their appearance within the last year, and although at the present time an occasional trout is caught by the anglers, Perch and other warm water species predominate.

The Clarks Fork

On the Western slope of the Rockies lie two large drainages, namely the Kootenai and the Clark's Fork of the Columbia. The headwaters of the Clark's Fork arise in Deer Lodge, Powell and Granite counties and practically all of its tributaries afford very good Native fishing while Rainbow may be found farther down stream where water temperatures have become a trifle too high for

the tolerance of Native trout. Loch Leven are also to be found in several tributary streams such as the Little Blackfoot and the Lower Bitterroot; and Rock Creek and the Big Blackfoot River afford Native and Rainbow fishing par excellence.

The Flathead

It would be futile to describe at this time the vast amount of fishing to be found in the Flathead drainage which flows down to join the Clark's Fork near Paradise, Montana. Practically all of the fishing originating in this region originates in Flathead Lake, being it is the reservoir for much of the drainage system above. Natives, Rainbow and Dolly Varden are the three most sought after game fish in this region. However, the Bass fishing enthusiast may find a number of lakes and sloughs where he may indulge in this sport to his heart's content and specimens weighing up to five and six pounds are not at all uncommon. Flathead Lake is also the home of hundreds of thousands of Sockeye Salmon and during the summer months and the late fall thousands of sportsmen may be seen lining the shores of this body of water deriving much pleasure and sport from this species.

The Kootenai

The Kootenai River being situated in the Northwest corner of Montana entirely within Lincoln county arises in the Province of Canada, flowing into Montana through Idaho, back into Canada through the Kootenai Lakes and thence into the Columbia River. This River possesses a number of outstanding streams such as the Fisher River, Tobacco River, Yaak River and many smaller tributaries in addition to a large number of mountain lakes which are all stocked with trout, the Rainbow, Native, Eastern Brook species. The main Kootenai River while not considered in former years as the best fishing, has of late years improved and offers very good Rainbow and Dolly Varden angling. The Sturgeon ascend the Kootenai River as far as the Kootenai Falls between Libby and Troy as does a sizeable run of Rainbow trout presumably migrating up from the Kootenai Lakes in Canada.

Fish Hatcheries

To assure Montana sportsmen that such a vast territory shall remain properly stocked, the Department at this time maintains and operates 12 major hatcheries and the Fish and Wildlife Service operates three. All of these units are dedicated solely to the rearing of trout and other game species. In addition to the trout hatcheries the Fish and Wildlife Service maintains and operates a warm water pond culture station at Miles City, Montana, in cooperation with the Montana Fish and Game Department. The Montana Fisheries Division also operates a warm water rearing pond site recently constructed near Bowdoin Lake. The combined output of these hatcheries and rearing ponds is well over 25 million fish each season, many of these from six and eight inches long at the time of liberation and it is only hoped that future events

will so shape themselves that an adequate expansion program can be instituted at the earliest possible moment to adequately cope with the increased fishing pressures that are bound to occur in the near future.

Lake Fishing

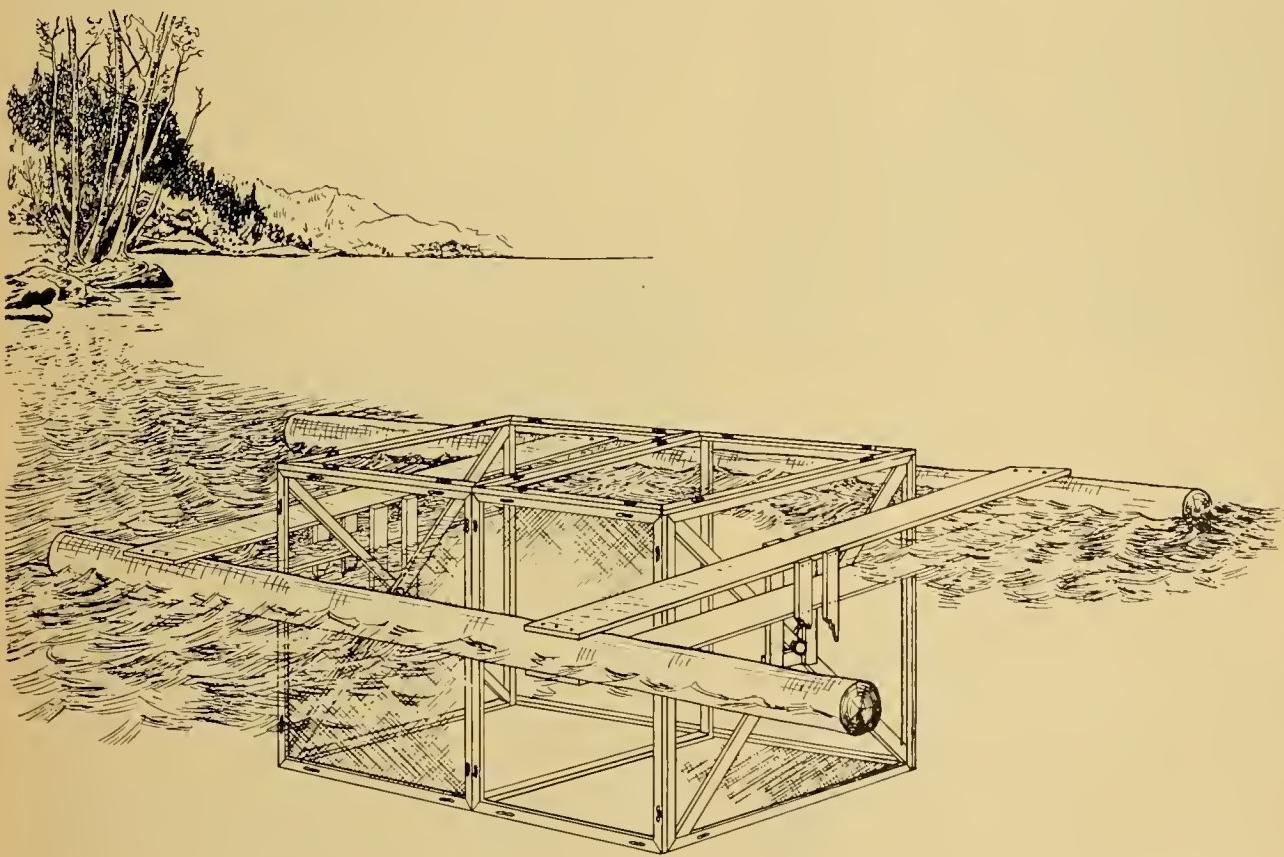
To those who are acquainted with various lakes, wonderful Bass fishing is to be had; and to those ambitious souls who wish to shoulder a light pack and hit the trail, the many remote lakes lying in the back country offer fishing which only the poets can describe.

Practically all of Montana's streams will be relatively clear and near a normal flow. This means that practically all of the waters will afford excellent fishing.

An intensive stocking program has been carried on throughout the last few years and Montana has been most fortunate in being able to maintain all hatcheries in full production, in fact we have actually increased production in several cases.



Governor Sam C. Ford, at his desk, receiving Sportsman's License No. 1, handed him by J. S. McFarland, State Fish and Game Warden. This license has been presented annually to the Governor by the Fish and Game Commissioners and expresses their appreciation for his efforts in behalf of the state's wildlife resources.



Drawing of "Phillips Live Car" discussed in March issue of Wildlife Bulletin

Photo 5/1/44

SPECIFICATIONS: Live Car to be approximately six feet square. Panels on sides to be removable. Each panel to be 3'x6' and interchangeable, as two sets are necessary for successful operation. First set to be of bronze or copper screen No. 8 mesh, .004 wire or 18 gauge. Second set to be of bronze or copper screen No. 4 mesh, .054 wire or 17 gauge. Second set to be installed when fish have acquired sufficient size to prevent their escape through No. 4 mesh. Live Car to be installed between timbers so it can be

rotated for cleaning and changing of screens. Top surface should not be out of water over 6 inches.

If long boom timbers are available, it is advisable to build these in sets of 4 or 5 as in this way all units are grouped for more efficient care.

Screens should be cleaned with a fibre brush at regular intervals so that openings do not become obstructed with algae and thereby prevent free movement of plankton through screen.

Fort Peck Game Farm



The buildings at the Fort Peck Game Farm were purchased from the Army Engineers for a very nominal sum. They consist of two dwelling houses, four brooder houses, one office, an incubation building and a carpenter shop. In addition to the buildings, 72 covered runways 9' x 100' have been constructed leading from the brooder houses to five fenced

and covered holding pens each 50' x 700'. There are also five mating pens each 150' x 400'.

ver Pheasant and White Pheasant are raised for show purposes because of their variety of color and plumage. On the succeeding page is a picture story of the raising of pheasants at the Game Farm from the egg to the bird ready for liberation.



Sportsmen assisting in the liberation of Ringnecked Pheasants.

and covered holding pens each 50' x 700'. There are also five mating pens each 150' x 400'.

The office and incubation building was damaged by fire on April 8th. Incubators were immediately put in operation in the other buildings and production will be on full schedule within a short time. A new building has been purchased from the Army Engineers at Fort Peck and is being moved to the site of the old one.

The incubation and rearing methods used are modern in every respect. Temperatures are controlled by thermostats in the brooder houses as well as in the incubators and hatchers. Experiments are being carried out by Mr. V. W. Bailey, foreman of the Game Farm, in an attempt to produce hardier pheasants by crossing pure Chinese Pheasants with pure Mongolian stock. The resulting Pheasant is more adapted to a wider variety of habitat.

Besides pheasants, Mr. Bailey also raises Chuckar Partridges and Valley Quail in experimental numbers to determine if these desirable game birds can adapt themselves to Montana's climatic conditions.

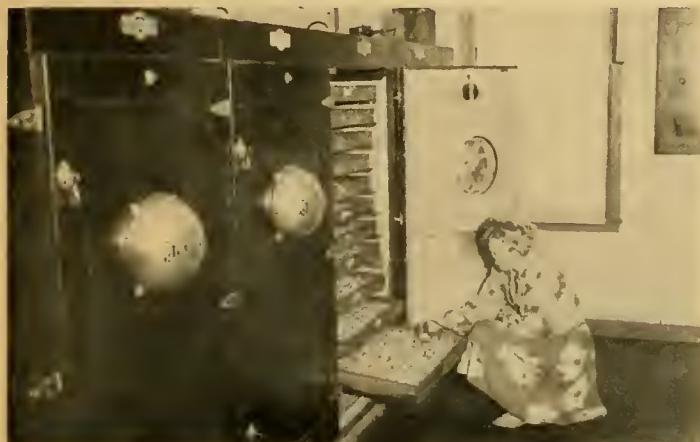
A few exotic species such as the Golden Pheasant, Lady Amherst, Melanistic Mutant, Reeves Pheasant, Sil-



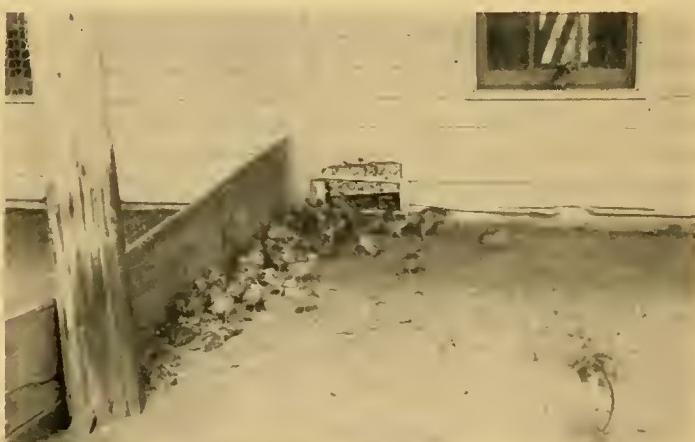
Nest of Pheasant eggs laid in the grass and brush cove in the mating pens. The eggs are collected daily by game farm workers and brought to the incubating building. The Pheasant hen continues to lay eggs in the nest until approximately 60 eggs have been taken.



As soon as the chicks emerge from the shell, they are placed in the brooder house. For the next few days careful supervision is given so that proper food and temperatures are provided to keep the mortality rate at a minimum.



The eggs collected from the nests are placed in incubators. A constant temperature of 99 degrees is maintained and fans carry off carbon dioxide fumes generated by the incubating eggs. The trays are labeled on the date the eggs are placed in the incubator and remain there for 24 days.



After a few days in the brooder house the chicks are big enough to enter the adjoining brooder pens. The brooder house and pen is their home for five weeks. Many of the birds are able to fly after they are three weeks old, hence the pens must be covered with netting.



The day before the chicks are to emerge from the shell, the trays are removed from the incubator and placed in the hatching room. This room is provided with high humidity to soften the shell and accelerate the chicks emergence. In the embryonic position the chick pecks from under the wing around the circumference of the shell. As the embryo turns and pecks, it ties the umbilical cord as neatly as if done by human hands.



The birds are placed in large covered runways after leaving the brooder pens. They remain there until liberated. When the birds are ready for liberation, they are placed in crates holding 25 birds each and shipped throughout the State. Breeding hens and cocks are kept in these pens throughout the winter for the next year's operations.

Grizzly Bear in Montana

The word Silver-tip stirs the imagination. Fabulous stories of ferocity and courage come readily to mind. Just to realize that one is traveling through Grizzly country makes even the most seasoned woodsman a little more alert—a little more conscious of the shadows in the deep woods—a little more forgetful of the cares and worries of the day. This, then, is the Grizzly, truly a creature of the wilderness; an integral part of that untrammeled land which lies far back in the vastness of the mountain ranges of the west.

We find that this big bear was first mentioned in the Journals of Lewis and Clark. They saw these "white bear" as the Indians called them, during the spring of 1804 at the junction of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, near the present boundary between Montana and North Dakota.

From that point on up the river, they made frequent mention of seeing these big fellows. They were particularly abundant in the vicinity of the Great Falls of the Missouri, where they apparently came to feed upon the carcasses of buffalo that were killed in being swept over the falls. These buffalo as described in the Journal, were pushed into the river, while drinking, by the press of the oncoming herds behind.

The picture has, of course, vastly changed today. The big Silver-tip has disappeared entirely from most of his former range. A nation-wide tally indicates that only three states can now claim over 10 Grizzlies. Of these Montana leads, with Wyoming and Idaho second and third. Even here they must be classed with the rarest of the big game species.

Outside of those that may be seen in the National Parks, Grizzlies are found only in the most remote and rugged mountain ranges. Quite in contrast to the relatively abundant black bear, the Grizzlies tend to shun man and his activities. To most of us, this adds greatly to their appeal. To catch but a glimpse of one in the wilds is a thrill long to be remembered. To be able to hunt for this king of big game, either with gun or camera, is a privilege that must be carefully guarded.

It was only natural to profit by the experience of several other western states that found their Grizzlies almost if not entirely gone before they had a chance to exert the needed protection. With this in mind, the season was closed entirely during 1941-42. This gave the Fish and Game Commission time to gather much needed informa-

tion concerning the location, numbers, hunting pressure and feeding habits of the Grizzly.

The following information pertaining to numbers was obtained:

Area	No.
Sun River-Teton (East of Cont. Divide)	54
South and Middle Fork of Flathead	58
North Fork of Flathead	23
Whitefish Range (Graves area)	18
Absaroka Primitive Area (Slough Creek-Hellroaring and head of Boulder)	10
Total	163

There are no doubt additional numbers of Grizzly bear scattered throughout the Upper Gallatin, Madison, Cabinet, Mission and Bitterroot ranges.

During the investigative work, it became increasingly evident what an important part closed areas had played in the protection and preservation of this bear. For example, in the Sun River Game Preserve, which has been closed to hunting since 1912, there are approximately



The tracks of a grizzly bear are shown above and those of a black bear below. Grizzly tracks may be distinguished from those of the black by the longer claws on the front foot. The tracks of the hind feet may also be used in distinguishing between the two species. The grizzly track shows the typical "ham" shape as compared with the somewhat human shape of the black bear. It may also be noted that the heel of the grizzly is set to one side of the center line of the foot, while that of the black bear is nearly directly in line. The heel of the grizzly is in most cases more pointed than that of the black. Taken as a whole, the average size of a grizzly bear track has been found to be larger than that of a black.

three Grizzlies to one on comparable ranges outside. With this point in mind, a substantial strip lying between the South Fork of the Flathead and the Swan Divide was kept closed when the season was again opened in 1942-43. In this way an ideal pattern of open and closed areas has been set up within this largest remaining wilderness region.

The work also brought out the point that spring bear hunting, at which time the animals were comparatively easy to obtain, represented a serious drain to the bear population. The combined impact of the spring and fall kill was felt to be taking at least the total annual increase. This represented a dangerous condition as far as the survival of a huntable surplus was concerned. For this reason spring Grizzly hunting has been discontinued.

It is interesting to note that the Black bear does not present any such conservation problem. They have demonstrated a remarkable ability to better than hold their own, even under rather heavy hunting pressure. They are far less dependent upon a wilderness environment and are often found out in the foothills of the mountain ranges. It is because of the comparative abundance of the Black bear that they have been considered separately from the Grizzly in regard to hunting regulations.

A Battle to the Death . . .

Bert Wilke was traveling over the Graves Creek deer range near Fortine during the late fall. In a little open park he noticed a great many deer tracks. In several places the ground was torn up, indicating that two large mule deer bucks had been fighting. Hair was scattered about, and here and there blood stained the snow.

The man followed the evidence of the struggle to the edge of a little slope. Here he found a track, showing that one deer had fallen and had then dragged himself down the hill. The other had followed. Some distance below and partly hidden under the limbs of an old snag lay a dead buck. His back had been broken and he was terribly mangled. Even after he was down his adversary had cut at him with his sharp antlers.

After a little trailing in the fresh snow, the other buck was found. He was lying in his bed. Bert came within a few feet of him before he tried to get up. He was also badly cut and bruised and had lost a considerable amount of blood. He got up with effort. The hair along his neck and shoulders raised and his eyes blazed in sullen defiance. Grudgingly he moved off into the shelter of a nearby fir thicket.

Bert thought as he turned away that here he had been privileged to glimpse for a moment evidence of a struggle as ageless as time. It has ever been in the wilds, that the males should fight for supremacy and the privilege of reproducing their kind. Thus the weak have perished while the fit and strong have survived.



Antelope are easily counted from an airplane.

ANTELOPE CENSUS . . .

The Fish and Game Department is completing a thorough check of the number of antelope within the State. The work was started during December. A shortage of personnel, however, made it impossible to carry it on continuously. Areas in which drift or inter-mingling of herds might result, were worked as complete units. The census will be finished in the near future, following the coverage of the Beaverhead and Square Butte areas.

The information gained is of particular interest at this time, as it will act as a check upon the distribution and numbers following last year's hunt. It will also furnish the essential basic information necessary in the setting of any future open seasons.

A small plane was used as an aid in conducting the census. It was found that by working from the air, two or three men could cover the widely scattered antelope ranges of the State in a relatively short time. This same coverage would have required a number of crews, if the work had been conducted from the ground.

The census has shown an encouraging picture. The antelope are apparently increasing satisfactorily throughout much of their natural range. It appears that the population in Montana has now reached a point where a carefully conducted hunt in selected areas may become a yearly event.

Many female antelope have horns that vary from 1 to 5 inches in length—while some are entirely without horns.

It is not generally known that the Woodland Caribou may be found in Montana. A small group, however, is located in the Upper Yaak River drainage, near the Canadian border.

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HARRY COSNER

WITH THE WARDENS

Harry Cosner, Deputy Game Warden, now stationed at Malta, began work for the Fish and Game Department under W. F. Scott, the first State Game Warden, in 1906.

The country was sparsely settled at that time and Mr. Cosner related, "Very few men were employed as Deputy Game Wardens as compared with today. Pete Nelson of Park County, Wm. Dorrington of Choteau, Charles Peyton of Ovando, Frank Ralston of Kalispell, Thompson of Glendive, (if my memory serves me right), Ferguson of Gallatin County, and another by the name of Sherlock, were employed as Deputy Game Wardens."

Mr. Cosner's first district extended from Havre east to the North Dakota line and from the Canadian border south to the Missouri River. Occasionally he patrolled to the Flathead country and at times went as far west as Troy. He traveled on railroad passes to points nearest his destination, taking his saddle with him and hired horses to ride the remaining distances.

Game was quite plentiful in this area according to Mr. Cosner. Upland game birds, particularly sharp-tail grouse, sage hens and ruffed grouse were abundant from the Bear Paw Mountains to the mouth of Big Dry Creek on the Missouri. Deer, antelope, bear and quite a number of mountain lions were killed. The now extinct Audubon Sheep was also found in this region; the last of this species was reported killed in 1919.

Mr. Cosner believes that one of the most progressive programs undertaken by the department at the present time is the stocking of reservoirs with various species of game fish. To date over 200 reservoirs in Phillips and Valley counties have been stocked with bass, perch, crappies and pike.

In 1915, Harry left the employ of the Fish and Game Department and went into private business at Malta. In 1928, he again entered the service of the department as Deputy Game Warden and has remained to the present time. His district now consists of Valley county with headquarters at Malta.

ARREST RECORD

There were six arrests for violations of the game laws in March. Fines imposed totaled \$107.50.

In April thirteen arrests were reported with fines totaling \$316.00.

FORMER EMPLOYEES NOW IN THE ARMED FORCES

J. P. Campbell	Bob Brink
A. A. O'Claire	Robert Casebeer
C. N. Lindsay	Wm. E. Schultz
R. H. Lambeth	Julius K. Stinson
Lester Newman	Burke Thompson
J. Thompson	Forest Keller
Waldo Vangness	Ed Furnish
C. E. Willey	Bill Thompson
Don Brown	Ken Thompson
Donald Wright	Gene Sherman
Ben Whale	Ralph Shields
Leo LaTray	Ralph Snyder
Emmett Colley	Vern Campbell
	Harold Fletcher

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO THE SPORTSMEN

The Fish and Game Department wishes to take this opportunity to thank the sportsmen for the real interest they have taken in this publication.

Due to the many encouraging letters received requesting that the Montana Wildlife Bulletin be continued, permission has been granted to publish three additional issues. It is planned that the next issue will carry a detailed report of the expenditures incurred in publishing the Bulletin. A plan will also be outlined suggesting the further continuance on a subscription basis.

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